DOCUMENT RESUME

FL 026 288

ED 442 283

AUTHOR	McWhorter, John
TITLE	Spreading the Word: Language and Dialect in America.
ISBN	ISBN-0-325-00198-7
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	83p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Heinemann, 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912 ($12.50). Tel: 603-431-7894; Fax: 603-431-7840; Web site: http://www.heinemann.com.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Amharic; Applied Linguistics; Black Dialects; Chinese; Code Switching (Language); *English; English (Second Language); Ethnic Groups; Hebrew; Hindi; Korean; *Nonstandard Dialects; Oral Language; Regional Dialects; Russian; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Sociolinguistics; *Standard Spoken Usage; Tagalog; Uncommonly Taught Languages; Vietnamese

ABSTRACT

This short book argues that the idea that there is one best English--or standard English--is wrong, and that nonstandard dialects are not bastardizations of standard English but alternate variations upon the basic plan of English, of which the standard one. With a general focus on classroom applications, this book makes accessible to teachers, teacher educators, and administrators basic language principles that are commonly accepted by linguists but rarely disseminated in an accessible form to general audiences. Using data from several different languages, it is argued that speech differences heard in America are qualitatively equivalent heard in other parts of the world where the same differences are not considered "bad" language. The thesis of the book is linked not only to "prescriptive grammar" but to more immediate issues facing classroom teachers such as Black English and code switching between Spanish and English. One of four chapters is dedicated to showing how mixture between languages is a worldwide and natural phenomenon, rather than a "language ravaging accident." Chapter titles include the following: "I Hear So Much Bad Grammar These Days"; "It's Just Slang, Isn't It?"; "They Just Mix Them Up!"; and "The Linguistic Rainforest." Extensive references are provided as well as an index. (Author/KFT)

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